

Special Circumstances and YIT Q&A (2007 High School Counselor Video Conference)
[Questions in bold.]

Would an emancipated borrower be eligible for a dependency override?

Based on simply emancipated status, no. If there are other factors, such as the incapacitation of parents, yes. Without other special circumstances, emancipation alone would not be the basis for dependency override.

What about a student who is legally emancipated due to parents unable to care for them because of disabilities? How do they fill out the FAFSA?

The student would need to contact the financial aid office at the college where he/she plans to attend to request the waiver of a dependency override. By following the office procedures and presenting documentation of these special circumstances, many financial aid officers would approve a dependency override. The student could then work with the financial aid office to complete the FAFSA with his/her own income and asset information.

With regard to obtaining a dependency override is there a time frame relative to when the child becomes independent? Example: can a student say the situation began during the last month of their senior year and as a result the student is now independent because of the situation?

Family history and the severity of any problem are both factors in a dependency override as well as third party documentation. For example, a student who was sexually abused by a parent late in their senior year and was forced to leave the family home (with or without agency intervention) could be considered for dependency override with third party documentation and an appeal.

Can a dependency override be gained for a student who has citizenship but parents do not and parents spend more time out of the country and parents avoided many tax requirements?

Parents who are not required to complete a U.S. income tax return can still complete the FAFSA. If their native country has a central tax system (like Canada, Belgium, Pakistan, India, etc.), the FAFSA is completed noting "foreign tax return".

What happens if a parent absolutely refuses to complete the FAFSA for their child?
(None of the stated dependency overrides apply.)*

Unfortunately, the student will be unable to complete the FAFSA. Parental refusal to complete the FAFSA is not grounds to waive parental information.

- Students in this situation need to pursue other resources, such as scholarships (both college-based and private). Private scholarships can be researched online at many no fee Web sites. While www.fastweb.com is probably the largest, there are many other sites that can be helpful.
- Private loans can be another resource to meet tuition expenses. The costs of these loans are usually greater than federal loans. Many students will need a co-borrower for these credit-based programs.
- Students can also pursue service to their country for resources to meet higher education costs. The Americorps Program (<http://www.americorps.org/>) can provide funds for tuition and a living stipend based on community service. Students may also wish to pursue ROTC in one of the service branches at their college to meet college expenses with a commitment to service after college.

It is also recommended that student meet with a financial aid officer at their chosen college to request that his/her parents be contacted by the Financial Aid Office. It is possible that when a parent understands that the completion of the FAFSA does not entail financial obligation, he/she may be more receptive to completing the form. The financial aid officer can also offer to help the parent and student complete the FAFSA which could be an additional problem that could be resolved.

Regarding independent student criteria – what do students do when they are 18 and have no support from their parents? In other words, they have no tax information.*

One of the primary principles of financial aid is that it is based on the ability of families to contribute to higher education—not the willingness to contribute. If a student finds that his/her parents refuse to provide income and asset information, the student will not be able to complete the FAFSA.

The student must begin to explore alternative resources, such as scholarships, alternative loans and service obligations to meet educational expenses.

Youth in Transition

Regarding students who come to Michigan from another state – are they required to be residing in the state of Michigan for a specific amount of time to be eligible for Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and all other sources of available funds?

YIT (Youth in Transition) is Michigan's version of the Chafee Foster Care Program is available to out of state students who have a closed foster care case. If

an out of state student still has an open foster care case, his/her home state would provide the funds for the Chafee Program in their state.

ETV can award funds to foster care youth with a closed case from out of state and to students who are Michigan residents and will attend an out of state school. Foster youth in transition can only receive funds from one state for the same period of time. ETV case managers can work with the student and state agency to help obtain documentation of their status.

Both of these programs are federally funded and are flexible about residency issues. Programs that are solely supported by Michigan restrict funds to Michigan residents.

When a student is approved for the Education Training Voucher (ETV), how are the funds awarded? Are the funds sent directly to the college or does the student receive the funds directly?

ETV funds are usually sent directly to the student's college/university, landlord or other vendor. There are cases where funds are submitted directly to the student. For example, a student may wish to purchase a computer at a major retailer but the retailer has difficulty in processing the funds correctly. To assist the student, a check would be issued to the student (documentation of purchase would be required).

In order to receive the Casey Family funds does the 12 months in foster care have to be consecutive or a total of 12 months in foster care? Are the 12 months to have been spent during any particular period of life?

Based on the Orphan Foundation of America Web site (<http://www.orphan.org/index.php?id=30>) eligible foster youth must have been in foster care for one consecutive year at the time of their 18th birthday or high school graduation or been adopted or taken into legal guardianship out of foster care after their 16th birthday. Youth who lost both parents to death before the age of 18 and were not subsequently adopted are also eligible for scholarship consideration.

What is the difference between an “open” and “closed” case in YIT?

An open case is a foster youth who is still active in the foster care system starting at the age of 14 until as late as the age of 21. A closed case is a former foster youth who was in foster care on or after the age of 14 but is no longer under Department of Human Services supervision.

Is a foster care student considered independent or not? Whose financial information do they need to provide when filling out the FAFSA?

Nearly all foster care youth will be considered an automatic independent for the purposes of financial aid because they are considered a ward or a dependent of the state. These foster youth will complete the FAFSA using only their own income and asset information. No dependency override will needed.